

## Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04

USIA-06 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07

NRC-05 FEA-01 /122 W  
----- 004217

R 041814Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8445  
ERDA HQ WASHDC  
ERDA HQ GERMANTOWN  
INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS  
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 19605

MOSCOW FOR SIEVERING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH ENRG UK

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING: BENN VOICES  
CTNCERN OVER US POSITION

1. IN DECEMBER 1 MEETING WITH ERDA ADMINISTRATOR DR.  
ROBERT SEAMANS, SECSTATE FOR ENERGY BENN MADE A SPECIAL  
POINT OF VOICING HIS CONCERN OVER APPARENT U.S. POSITION  
THAT REPROCESSING BY UK OF SPENT FUEL FROM SUCH CUSTOM-  
ERS AS JAPAN SHOULD BE DELAYED PENDING FURTHER DEFINITION  
OF U.S. NUCLEAR POLICY AS A RESULT OF OCTOBER 28 STATE-  
MENT BY PRESIDENT FORD. BENN CHARACTERIZED PROBLEM AS  
"MB 10" ISSUE. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD U.S. POSITION TO  
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BE THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO AUTHORIZE TRANSFER OF SPENT

FUEL FROM JAPAN TO UK BUT WAS NOT PREPARED AT SAME TIME TO AUTHORIZE ITS REPROCESSING. THIS WOULD BE SUBJECT OF A SUBSEQUENT DECISION BY U.S.

2. BENN EMPHASIZED THIS WOULD BE A VERY DIFFICULT POSITION FOR BRITISH TO ACCEPT SINCE/FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS THEY NEEDED CERTAINTY OF BEING ABLE TO REPROCESS SUCH FUEL. HE NOTED SPECIFICALLY THAT BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS LTD. (BNFL) WOULD SUFFER SUBSTANTIAL COMMERCIAL DISADVANTAGE IF NOT PERMITTED TO PERFORM REPROCESSING SERVICES ON TIMELY BASIS. HE RAISED QUESTION PUT BY SOME WHETHER US IN FACT WAS TRYING TO PREVENT BNFL FROM OBTAINING THIS BUSINESS.

3. BENN DECLARED THAT UK FULLY SHARED U.S. CONCERNS OVER PROBLEMS OF PROLIFERATION OF REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY AND AVAILABILITY OF SEPARATED PLUTONIUM AND WERE WILLING TO COOPERATE INTERNATIONALLY TO REMEDY THEM. HE THEREFORE QUESTIONED WHETHER APPARENT U.S. POSITION OF NOT NOW APPROVING REPROCESSING BUT MERELY STORAGE OF SPENT FUEL IN UK WAS AT ALL NECESSARY TO MEET U.S. OBJECTIVES. HE SAID UK WAS PREPARED TO STORE SEPARATED PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM WITH UNDERSTANDING THAT MATERIALS WOULD NOT BE RETRANSFERRED OR RETURNED TO ORIGINATOR OF SPENT FUEL WITHOUT PRIOR U.S. APPROVAL. BENN HOPED THAT SUCH A PROCEDURE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE AND THAT SEVERAL PENDING ARRANGEMENTS TO RECEIVE SPENT FUEL IN UK FOR REPROCESSING COULD BE APPROVED BY U.S. ON THIS BASIS.

4. COMMENT: IT IS TRUE BRITISH CURRENTLY HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT LONG TERM STORAGE IN UK OF NUCLEAR WASTE SHOULD PROPOSED TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEM SUCH AS VITRIFICATION NOT PROVE SATISFACTORY. FORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, UK IS WITHXXDQXVQRUNVA NOLOGY TRANSFER AND STORAGE OF PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM. US CAN ASSURE BRITISH STAY FIRMLY SUPPORTIVE OF OUR POSITION BY NOT APPEARING TO MAKE LIFE PURPOSELY DIFFICULT FOR BNFL WHICH HAS AN ALREADY ESTABLISHED COMMERCIAL OPERATION. CONVERSELY' MAINTAINING A POSITION WHICH LENDS CREDENCE TO IDEA US MAY BE SEEKING ITS OWN

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COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE COULD WELL PLAY INTO HANDS OF THOSE ANTAGONISTIC TO US INITIATIVE AND WEAKEN BRITISH SUPPORT.

ARMSTRONG

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLICIES, NUCLEAR FUELS, FISSIONABLE MATERIALS TRANSFER  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 04 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ElyME  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760449-0890  
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**Office:** ACTION OES  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
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**Review Authority:** ElyME  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:** ANOMALY  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING: BENN VOICES CTNCERN OVER US POSITION  
**TAGS:** TECH, ENRG, UK  
**To:** STATE ERDA  
**Type:** TE  
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